

### ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

To address the requirements described above, one or more embodiments of the invention provide a method, apparatus, and article of manufacture for using and storing objects. Object data is stored separately from a file containing an instance of the object. The object data may be stored on a secure server and may be maintained by a manufacturer or supplier. A portion of the object and a reference to the object data is stored with the file. When the file is opened in an application, the portion of the object and the reference are utilized to retrieve the object data (if the user has the appropriate access permissions). Thereafter, the object can be utilized and displayed.

In accordance with embodiments of the invention, catalogs of object data may be maintained. Additionally, object data is secure such that objects cannot be utilized unless the appropriate access permissions are obtained. If appropriate access permissions are not obtained, the user may only be able to view a blank or "empty" document or drawing.

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